

**SHORT FORM BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION
THREATENED, ENDANGERED, PROPOSED, AND SENSITIVE (TEPS) WILDLIFE
MALHEUR NATIONAL FOREST - EMIGRANT CREEK RANGER DISTRICT**

PROJECT NAME LOCO Project

LOCATION Silvies; **Sub-Basin.** Middle and Upper Silvies River **Watersheds**; Sagehen Creek, Stancliffe Creek, Myrtle Creek, Flat Creek, Dog Creek **Subwatersheds** Harney & Grant **Counties**

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T.19 S., R.31 E. Sections 5, 8-10,15-17,20-23 T,19., R.30 E., Sections 13,23-25,35-36; T 18 S., R 30E., Sections 21, 23-25,29; T 18S. R31 E., Sections 19,20,29-32.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Commercial thin up to 3,000 acres of conifer to a 40 basal area leaving snag densities at a minimum of four snags per acre for wildlife.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES: Forest thinning to reduce stand densities and increase resilient forest structure and species composition. Facilitation of the return of characteristic fire and to reduce the risk of large-scale stand replacement fires in the future.

PRE-FIELD REVIEW:

The following TEPS species have potential habitat or documented occurrences in the affected subwatersheds: gray wolf, bald eagle, Lewis' woodpecker, white-headed woodpecker, fringed myotis, pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, Western bumble bee and shiny tightcoil.

Designated or proposed critical habitat for Threatened or Endangered species in affected subwatersheds: Yes ____ No XX

Proximity of project to TEPS species habitat: A gray wolf has been documented to travel through the district south of the planning area. Other unconfirmed sightings occurred near the project area. There has not been any documented sightings in the project area; however due to the high concentrations of elk on private lands near Loco project, there is a probability a wolf could establish residence near the project.

Occupied bald eagles nest occurs along the Silvies River near proposed units. No winter roosting has been documented but is likely near units near Silvies River and bordering private property near Silvies Valley.

No Lewis's woodpecker have been documented in or near the project area; however about 125 acres of secondary habitat lies within proposed project; however less than one acre would be treated with the Loco project. There is potential primary habitat in the surrounding area from the Spear Springs fire that occurred in 2007.

White-headed woodpecker have been found in the watershed but no nests were found in proposed thinning units. Sixteen white-headed woodpecker observations were recorded in proposed project area, but no nests were found. White-headed woodpecker habitat occurs throughout the project area.

Pallid bat forage within shrub steppe habitat, however this bat roosts in rock outcrops and have been found roosting under bridges. There are rimrocks near the Boulder and Bellows Creek drainages that could provide roosting habitat.

Fringed myotis roost in late staged decayed ponderosa pine snags. They are foraging habitat along the Silvies River and some tributaries like Stancliffe Creek.

Townsend's big-eared bats occur in forest fringe habitat but roost in caves or abandoned buildings. Occasionally this bat roosts in hollow ponderosa pine snags and could be present, but low probability of occurrence is expected in the project.

Western bumble bees are habitat generalist occurring where flowering plants are available. Due to lack of surveys it is unknown if this insect is present in the project area. It is probable bees could be in the proposed units. The most probable areas are near meadows and units that contain open riparian vegetation.

Shiny tightcoils could be impacted in the moister units containing mixed conifers and in the aspen enhancement units that are contained in proposed units.

Project is compliant with any applicable species recovery plans, management plans, etc.:

Yes XX No

FIELD RECONNAISSANCE REQUIRED: Yes XX No

PROTECTION MEASURES: Any active white-headed woodpecker nest snag would be avoided and a 3 to 5 acre buffer around the nest would be omitted from thinning.

Seasonal restrictions would occur on units 14 & 15 from January 15 to August 31 for nesting bald eagles or until wildlife biologist determines eaglets have fledged from nest sites.

If possible avoidance of large ponderosa pine snags in later decay with sloughing bark ("buckskin" snags) is recommended for bat roosting and woodpecker nesting. Utilize rimrock and large boulder patches as leave areas during thinning operations to meet snag density requirements.

Leave all un-merchantable trees within and adjacent to aspen stands as downed wood.

DETERMINATION OF EFFECTS with RATIONALE:

A **No Effect** determination is given for gray wolf based on:

- Habitat modification to big game cover is minor and would not affect big game distribution.
- Only minor impacts to big game or big game habitat, therefore no impacts to wolf prey base.
- There are no potential wolf denning or rendezvous sites in the area.
- No wolves have been documented in Loco project area.

A **No Impact** determination is given for bald eagles based on the following:

- No treatments are proposed within the nest stand near the Silvies River.
- Seasonal restrictions and/or monitoring will occur for units near nesting area and along Silvies River so no disturbance to nesting birds would occur.
- It is unlikely trees harvested would impact any potential roost or perch tree.
- No impacts to foraging habitat along the Silvies River would occur and no impacts to potential prey for bald eagles is expected.

A **No Impact** determination is given for Lewis' woodpecker based on the following:

- Existing snag habitat would not be impacted to any measurable amount that would affect existing habitat for this woodpecker.
- There could be an increase in Rx burn intensity as a result of the proposed project due to the small diameter slash that may be present from harvesting. Excessive slash may produce a more desirable burn in the future for this woodpecker.
- Only approximately 125 acres of potential secondary Lewis's woodpecker habitat exists in the project area but less than one acre would have harvest activity.
- More open ponderosa pine stands would be prepared for future prescribed fire, which could enhance habitat for this fire dependent woodpecker in the mid to long term.

A **May Impact Individuals or Habitat (MIIH)** determination for the short term and a **Beneficial Impact (BI)** for the mid to long term is stated for White-headed woodpeckers for the following reasons:

- Nest abandonment is likely when harvest operations occur during nesting period.
- Incidental loss of large trees and loss of snags would occur during harvest operations. Loss of some foraging habitat is likely.
- Approximately 895 acres of 13,290 acres of primary habitat (~7%) would receive harvesting.
- A more resilient forest structure benefits this woodpecker because they rely on old growth ponderosa pine for foraging habitat and future snag recruitment.
- White-headed woodpeckers require more open forest structure for nesting habitat.

A **May Impact Individuals or Habitat (MIIH)** determination is stated for all the sensitive bat species, pallid, fringed myotis, and Townsend's big-eared bat based on the following assessment:

- Roosting habitat could be incidentally impacted due to snag removal.
- Foraging habitat could be improved due to the open conditions created by thinning.
- No riparian or potential watering sources such as dugout ponds would be impacted.

A **May Impact Individuals or Habitat (MIIH)/Beneficial Impact (BI)** determination is given for western bumble bee's due to the following:

- Bees are ground nesters and extraction of logs could impact a nest by skidding logs over the nest site.
- Some flowering plants providing nectar could be damaged during logging operations.
- Reducing conifer densities allows more light on the forest floor, which can produce more flowering plants benefitting pollinators like bees.

A **May Impact Individuals or Habitat (MIIH)** determination is given for shiny tightcoil for the following assumptions:

- Harvesting and skidding of logs could crush downed logs where tightcoils may occur. Most likely to occur in the units containing aspen, adjacent to a riparian area or springs.
- Since riparian buffers would occur, the likelihood of impacting this snail is considerably reduced. Protection measures to leave un-marketable material in aspen stands reduces impacts to tightcoil habitat.

Table 1 displays the threatened, endangered and sensitive (TES) species considered in the analysis for Loco Project.

Species <i>Scientific Name</i>	Status	Habitat Requirements	Occurrence	Effects <i>Disturbance</i>
Terrestrial Species				
Gray Wolf <i>Canis lupus</i>	E	Habitat generalist. Affected by ungulate populations. Road densities < 1 mil./sq. mi.	HD/N	NE
Northern Bald Eagle <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	S	Large bodies of water. Large conifers for nesting.	HD/D	NI
North American Lynx <i>Lynx canadensis</i>	T	Sub-alpine fir, lodgepole. No Critical Habitat in Oregon.	HN/N	NE
American Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	S	Nests on cliffs >75 ft. high.	HN/N	NI
California Wolverine <i>Gulo gulo luteus</i>	S	Alpine tundra, subalpine cirque basins for denning. Scavenger in diversity of habitats/	HN/N	NI
Pygmy Rabbit <i>Brachylagus idahoensis</i>	S	Dense tall big sagebrush and deep friable soils.	HN/N	NI
Bufflehead <i>Bucephala albeola</i>	S	Nests in high elevation forest lakes Large bodies of water. Nests in cavities.	HN/N	NI
Greater Sage Grouse <i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i> <i>phaios</i>	S	Sagebrush obligate. Leks in openings in sagebrush. Needs grass cover for nesting.	HN/N	NI
Wallowa Rosy Finch <i>Leucosticte tephrocotis</i> <i>wallowa</i>	S	Alpine basins above timberline.	HN/N	NI
Bobolink <i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	S	Moist meadows, grasses, sedges, forbs. Mesic shrubs Irrigated hay fields.	HN/N	NI
Upland Sandpiper <i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	S	Montane meadows >1,000 acres.	HN/N	NI
Lewis' woodpecker <i>Melanerpes lewis</i>	S	Open woodlands near water. Ponderosa pine savanna, burnt pine forests	HD/N	NI
Grasshopper Sparrow <i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	S	Grasslands and bunchgrass prairies	HN/N	NI
White-headed woodpecker <i>Picoides albolarvatus</i>	S	Open ponderosa pine forest with large trees	HD/D	MIH/BI
Pallid bat <i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	S	Desert grasslands and shrub-steppe with rock outcrops. Uses rock crevices/caves.	HD/N	MIH
Townsend's big-eared bat <i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	S	Desert shrub, juniper, and pine forests. Associated w/caves, mines, buildings.	HD/N	MIH

Species <i>Scientific Name</i>	Status	Habitat Requirements	Occurrence	Effects Determination
Fringed myotis <i>Myotis thysanodes</i>	S	Most habitat types, forested, riparian. Roosts in caves, crevices, bridges, mines, large conifer snags.	HD/N	MIH
Shiny tightcoil <i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	S	Moist riparian areas with downed woody debris. Primarily under deciduous trees.	HD/S	MIH
Morrison bumble bee <i>Bombus morrisoni</i>	S	Open scrub habitat, Feeds on rabbitbrush, thistles, sunflowers, alfalfa.	HN/N	NI
Western bumble bee <i>Bombus occidentalis</i>	S	Nests underground, habitat generalist. Many flowering plants are pollinated.	HD/N	MIH
Sullivans Sulphur <i>Calias Christina sullivani</i>	S	Occurs on clovers (<i>Trifolium</i>) and sweetvetches (<i>Hedysarum</i>). Larvae found on desert bushpea and false lupine. Shrub steppe and mountain meadow habitat.	HN/N	NI

Status

E	Federally Endangered
T	Federally Threatened
S	Sensitive species from Regional Forester's list
C	Candidate species under Endangered Species Act

Occurrence

HD	Habitat Documented or suspected within the project area or near enough to be impacted by project activities
HN	Habitat Not within the project area or affected by its activities
D	Species Documented in general vicinity of project activities
S	Species Suspected in general vicinity of project activities
N	Species Not documented and not suspected in general vicinity of project activities

Effects Determinations

Threatened and Endangered Species

NE	No Effect
NLAA	May Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect
LAA	May Effect, Likely to Adversely Affect
BE	Beneficial Effect

Sensitive Species

NI	No Impact
MIH	May Impact Individuals or Habitat, but Will Not Likely Contribute to a Trend Towards Federal Listing or Cause a Loss of Viability to the Population or Species
WIFV	Will Impact Individuals or Habitat with a Consequence that the Action May Contribute to a Trend Towards Federal Listing or Cause a Loss of Viability to the Population or Species
BI	Beneficial Impact

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